Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-22 (canceled).

Claim 23 (currently amended): An information processing apparatus, which is coupled to a plurality of other information processing apparatuses through a network, ~~transmitting a software cell including a command, a program and data to the other information processing apparatuses, and carrying out network distributed processing, the information processing apparatus including a master/slave status,~~ the information processing apparatus comprising:

capability exchange means for:

(a) collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses; ~~and~~

(b) creating an apparatus information table by:

(i) for each of the other information processing apparatuses, transmitting one of a plurality of first software cells to said ~~all the~~ other information processing apparatus, ~~apparatuses on the network,~~ said transmitted first software cell including a direct memory access command, each of said other information processing apparatuses being configured to execute said transmitted direct memory access command, ~~wherein~~ the apparatus information table including: ~~includes~~

(A) apparatus data associated with all the other information processing apparatuses when the information processing apparatus is in a master status; and ~~wherein the apparatus information table includes~~

(B) identifications associated with all the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses

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associated with all the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the information processing apparatus is in a slave status, the <u>first</u> software cells requesting transmissions of information regarding the other information processing apparatuses~~;~~ and ~~by~~

(ii) <u>for each of the other information processing apparatuses,</u> receiving <u>one of a plurality of second</u> software cells as <u>a reply</u> ~~replies~~ from said <u>the</u> other information processing <u>apparatus,</u> ~~apparatuses~~<u>said received second software cell including a status return command;</u> ~~the capability exchange means further~~

(c) exchanging information regarding capability with the other information processing apparatuses by transmitting <u>one of</u> the <u>first</u> software <u>cells which includes</u> ~~cell including~~ information regarding own apparatus as the reply to the other information processing apparatus if the information processing apparatus receives <u>one of</u> the <u>second</u> software <u>cells which requests</u> ~~cell requesting~~ the transmission of information regarding the information processing apparatus from the other information processing apparatus~~;~~ and ~~wherein the capability exchange means,~~

(d) upon connection to the network of an additional information processing apparatus which was not previously connected to the network, <u>collecting</u> ~~collects~~ classification identification information of said information processing apparatus, said classification identification information indicating at least one of a feature and a function of said information processing apparatus, wherein the apparatus data includes information processing apparatus identification information which is generated <u>when</u> ~~upon~~ powering on ~~of~~ said information processing apparatus;

apparatus specifying means for<u>:</u>

(a) comparing information regarding a resource required to execute a function program, with information regarding the resource and the operating status in the apparatus information table~~;~~ and

(b)   specifying one of the information processing apparatuses capable of executing the

function program if the function program retained in the information processing

apparatus is executed; and

processing requesting means for transmitting <u>one of the first</u> a-software <u>cells which</u>

<u>requests</u> ~~cell requesting~~ an execution of the function program to the information processing

apparatus specified in the apparatus specifying means.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein:

the capability exchange means, upon connection to the network of the additional information processing apparatus which was not previously connected to the network, collects information regarding a resource and an operating status of the additional information processing apparatus and updates the apparatus information table.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein:

the other information processing apparatus has a plurality of processors for processing the function program; and

the capability exchange means collects information regarding a resource and an operating status of each of the plurality of processors, and saves the information in the apparatus information table.

Claim 26 (currently amended): <u>A</u> ~~An information processing~~ method <u>of operating an</u> <u>information processing apparatus</u> ~~for causing an information processing apparatus having a~~ ~~master/slave status,~~ which is coupled to a plurality of other information processing apparatuses through a network, <u>the</u> ~~to transmit a software cell including a command, a program and data to~~ ~~the other information processing apparatuses, and carry out network distributed processing, the~~ ~~information processing~~ method comprising:

(a)   collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses<u>;</u> ~~and~~

(b)   creating an apparatus information table by<u>:</u>

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(i)   for each of the other information processing apparatuses, transmitting one of a plurality of first software cells to said ~~all the~~ other information processing apparatus, ~~apparatuses on the network,~~ said transmitted first software cell including a direct memory access command, each of said other information processing apparatuses being configured to execute said transmitted direct memory access command, ~~wherein~~ the apparatus information table including: ~~includes~~

(A)   apparatus data associated with the other information processing apparatuses when the information processing apparatus is in a master status; and ~~wherein the apparatus information table includes~~

(B)   identifications associated with the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses associated with the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the information processing apparatus is in a slave status, the first software cells requesting transmissions of information regarding the other information processing apparatuses; ~~and by~~

(ii)   for each of the other information processing apparatuses, receiving one of a plurality of second software cells as a reply ~~replies~~ from said ~~the~~ other information processing apparatus, ~~apparatuses,~~ said received second software cell including a status return command; ~~further~~

(c)   exchanging information regarding capability with the other information processing apparatuses by transmitting one of the first software cells which includes ~~cell including~~ information regarding own apparatus as the reply to the other information processing apparatus if the information processing apparatus receives one of the second software cells which requests ~~cell requesting~~ the transmission of information regarding the information processing apparatus from the other information processing apparatus; ~~and~~

(d)   upon connection to the network of an additional information processing apparatus which was not previously connected to the network, collecting classification identification information of said information processing apparatus, said

classification identification information indicating at least one of a feature and a function of said information processing apparatus, wherein the apparatus data includes information processing apparatus identification information which is generated when ~~upon~~ powering on ~~of~~ said information processing apparatus;

(e)   comparing information regarding a resource required to execute a function program, with information regarding the resource and the operating status in the apparatus information table;~~, and~~

(f)   specifying one of the information processing apparatuses capable of executing the function program if the function program retained in the information processing apparatus is executed; and

(g)   transmitting <u>one of the first</u> ~~a~~ software <u>cells which requests</u> ~~cell requesting~~ an execution of the function program to the information processing apparatus specified.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The information processing method according to claim 26, further comprising, upon connection to the network of the additional information processing apparatus which was not previously connected to the network, collecting information regarding a resource and an operating status of the additional information processing apparatus and updating the apparatus information table.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The information processing method according to claim 26, further comprising collecting information regarding a resource and an operating status of each of the plurality of processors, and saving the information in the apparatus information table, wherein the other information processing apparatus has a plurality of processors for processing the function program.

Claim 29 (currently amended): An information processing system in which one information processing apparatus ~~having a master/slave status~~ and another information processing apparatus ~~having a master/slave status~~ are coupled through a network<u>,</u> ~~and network distributed processing is carried out by transmitting a software cell including a command, a program and data to the other information processing apparatus,~~ the one information processing apparatus comprising:

capability exchange means for:

(a)   collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses; and

(b)   creating an apparatus information table by:

(i)   for each of the other information processing apparatuses, transmitting one of a plurality of first software cells to said all the other information processing apparatus, apparatuses on the network said transmitted first software cell including a direct memory access command, each of said other information processing apparatuses being configured to execute said transmitted direct memory access command, wherein the apparatus information table including: includes

(A)   apparatus data associated with the other information processing apparatuses when the one information processing apparatus is in a master status; and wherein the apparatus information table includes

(B)   identifications associated with the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses associated with the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the one information processing apparatus is in a slave status, the first software cells requesting transmissions of information regarding the other information processing apparatuses; and by

(ii)   for each of the other information processing apparatuses, receiving one of a plurality of second software cells as a reply replies from said the other information processing apparatus, apparatuses, said received second software cell including a status return command; the capability exchange means further

(c)   exchanging information regarding capability with the other information processing apparatuses by transmitting one of the first software cells cell

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which includes ~~including~~ information regarding own apparatus as the reply to the other information processing apparatus if the information processing apparatus receives <u>one of</u> the <u>second</u> software <u>cells which request</u> ~~cell requesting~~ the transmission of information regarding the information processing apparatus from the other information processing apparatus<u>;</u> and ~~wherein the capability exchange means,~~

(d) upon connection to the network of an additional information processing apparatus which was not previously connected to the network, <u>collecting</u> ~~collects~~ classification identification information of said information processing apparatus, said classification identification information indicating at least one of a feature and a function of said information processing apparatus, wherein the apparatus data includes information processing apparatus identification information which is generated <u>when</u> ~~upon~~ powering on ~~of~~ said information processing apparatus;

apparatus specifying means for<u>:</u>

(a) comparing information regarding a resource required to execute a function program, with information regarding the resource and the operating status in the apparatus information table<u>;</u> and

(b) specifying one of the information processing apparatuses capable of executing the function program if the function program retained in the information processing apparatus is executed; and

processing requesting means for transmitting <u>one of the first</u> ~~a~~ software <u>cells which requests</u> ~~cell requesting~~ an execution of the function program to the information processing apparatus specified in the apparatus specifying means.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The information processing system according to claim 29, wherein:

the capability exchange means of the one information processing apparatus, upon connection to the network of the additional information processing apparatus which was not previously connected to the network, collects information regarding a resource and an operating status of the other information processing apparatus and updates the apparatus information table.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The information processing system according to claim 29, wherein:

the other information processing apparatus has a plurality of processors for processing the function program; and

the capability exchange means of the one information processing apparatus collects information regarding a resource and an operating status of each of the plurality of processors, and saves the information in the apparatus information table.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein information processing apparatus identification information of the information processing apparatus is generated by the information processing apparatus based at least in part on one or more of: (i) a date; and (ii) a time, of powering on of the information processing apparatus.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein, upon disconnection from the network of an information processing apparatus in a master status, at least one of the other information processing apparatuses in a slave status changes to a master status based, at least in part, on a comparison of the information processing apparatus identification information of said information processing apparatus which changes status and the information processing apparatus identification information of all the other information processing apparatuses.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The information processing method according to claim 26, wherein information processing apparatus identification information of the information processing apparatus is generated by the information processing apparatus based at least in part on one or more of: (i) a date; and (ii) a time, of powering on of the information processing apparatus.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The information processing method according to claim 26, further comprising determining, upon disconnection from the network of an information

processing apparatus in a master status, at least one of the other information processing apparatuses in a slave status to change to a master status based, at least in part, on a comparison of the information processing apparatus identification information of said information processing apparatus which changes status and the information processing apparatus identification information of all the other information processing apparatuses; and

changing the determined information processing apparatus status to master status.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The information processing system according to claim 29, wherein information processing apparatus identification information of the information processing apparatus is generated by the information processing apparatus based at least in part on one or more of: (i) a date; and (ii) a time, of powering on of the information processing apparatus.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The information processing system according to claim 29, wherein, upon disconnection from the network of an information processing apparatus in a master status, at least one of the other information processing apparatuses in a slave status changes to a master status based, at least in part, on a comparison of the information processing apparatus identification information of said information processing apparatus which changes status and the information processing apparatus identification information of all the other information processing apparatuses.